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Today in World Affairs

Fulbright Talk Likened To Chamberlain's View

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WASHINGTON.

Since the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee today is a member of President Johnson's own political party, the world will read with surprise a speech just made by Sen. J. William Fulbright, head of that important committee. He advocates a policy with respect to Cuba and the Soviet government that will be widely construed as a kind of passive acquiescence in the Communist behavior in the cold war, if not a willingness to appease the Communist regimes.

Sen. Fulbright's views, it has been noted by the White House, are his own. But nevertheless it is significant that anyone as prominent in Congress as the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee should be making the following series of declarations:

"The master myth of the cold war is that the Communist bloc is a monolith composed of governments which are not really governments at all, but organized conspiracies, divided among themselves perhaps in certain matters of tactics, but all equally resolute and implacable in their determination to destroy the free world.

"I believe that the Communist world is indeed hostile to the free world in its general and long-term intentions, but that the existence of this animosity in principle is far less important for our foreign policy than the great variations in its intensity and character both in time and among the individual members of the Communist bloc. . . .

"For a start, we can acknowledge the fact that the Soviet Union, though still a most formidable adversary, has ceased to be totally and implacably hostile to the West. . . .

"It is not communism as a doctrine, or communism as it is practiced within the Soviet Union or within any other country, that threatens us. . . .

"It is not Communist dogma as expounded within Russia, but Communist imperialism that threatens us and other peoples of the non-Communist world. In so far as a great nation mobilizes its power and resources for aggressive purposes, that nation, regardless of ideology, makes itself our enemy."

What is overlooked is that a dictatorship or totalitarian government can and does utilize to its advantage the discipline of the Communist party itself.

Unquestionably, there are differences between certain states in the Communist bloc, and it is conceivable that in due time some of them may be weaned away from Moscow or Peking. But Sen. Fulbright's contention that the disputes inside the Communist group of countries have become more important to American foreign policy than the activities and insidious operations of the Moscow government throughout the globe will be strongly disputed.

It is perhaps in the field of Latin-American policy that Sen. Fulbright's speech will evoke the most criticism. For he openly declares that America's policy in trying to isolate Cuba politically and economically and to persuade other free-world countries to maintain economic boycotts against Cuba has been a "failure." He says, "there is

no reason to believe that it will succeed in the future."

The Arkansas Senator insists that he is "not arguing against the desirability of an economic boycott against the Castro regime, but against its feasibility." He says the "failure" has not been due to any "weakness" or "timidity" on the part of the U. S. government, but that the policy cannot succeed "unless we are prepared to take drastic sanctions" against our own allies. He contends that the prospects of "bringing down the Castro regime by political or economic boycott have never been very good," and he concludes:

"Having ruled out military invasion and blockade, and recognizing the failure of the boycott policy, we are compelled to consider the third of the three options open to us with respect to Cuba: The acceptance of the continued existence of the Castro regime as a distasteful nuisance but not an intolerable danger so long as the nations of the hemisphere are prepared to meet their obligation of collective defense under the Rio Treaty."

But Mr. Fulbright assumes a strength on the part of the inter-American organization that it does not possess today, largely because moral force has never been effectively used to denounce the tyranny that exists in Cuba, where a Communist apparatus has taken over the country. The Arkansas Senator overlooks the fact that the U. S. is the principal force inside the inter-American system and that, if this country throws in the sponge in the fight against Castro, the Latin-American countries will be inclined to do likewise.

Sen. Fulbright deprecates what he terms "excessive moralism." Yet if the U. S. abandons moral principles in world policy and turns toward the so-called "practical" side, with its materialistic motivation, and, in effect, admits that it cannot exercise its influence in the world for the good of downtrodden nations just because success is not immediately attainable, then the hopes of many peoples—that some day they may depend on the moral support of this country as they try to liberate themselves from dictatorship—will be wrecked on the seas of despair.

Sen. Fulbright's speech undoubtedly will be widely discussed, for it represents a point of view of many persons inside and outside our government who believe, as Chamberlain did in 1938, that a little bit of appeasement can never be harmful or bring on war. History, however, tells a different story.

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